

SALT II and U.S. Strategic Safeguards

Washington.

ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES of SALT is to regulate, in a balanced fashion, aspects of two fundamentally dissimilar and asymmetrical force structures. Not only are the force structures different in their composition, but different features on each side's forces are viewed as more threatening by the other side.

These differing perspectives have produced a negotiating process marked by various compromises and tradeoffs as each side seeks to protect the essential character of

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its own forces while attempting to minimize the most threatening aspects of the other side's.

The result is an agreement with some provisions clearly favoring one side and some clearly favoring the other. The question of equity, then, cannot adequately be evaluated by a narrow and selective critique of portions of the SALT II agreement. Only a balanced appraisal of the total will yield an adequate evaluation.

Two issues of particular concern to us with regard to equity have been the Soviets' unilateral right to deploy 308 Modern Large Ballistic Missiles (MLBM), which was allowed in SALT I [in 1972] and carried forward to SALT II, and the exclusion of the Backfire bomber from the aggregate totals of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVs) allowed under the agreement.

Clearly, the desired result would have been a major reduction in Soviet MLBMs in order to have reduced their very significant throw-weight capability and attendant potential to carry large numbers of warheads. Having failed to achieve that objective, we should accentuate our determination to obtain substantial reductions in future negotiations. In the interim, limiting the SS-18 [heavy missile] to 10 warheads achieves an important restraint on their MLBM potential.

The second major concern is the failure to count the Backfire bomber in the SNDV aggregate totals. While we are well aware of its employment capabilities in peripheral and maritime roles, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consistently recommended that the Backfire be included in the aggregate because it has an

intercontinental range capability.

Nevertheless, the United States did obtain some constraints on the Backfire, the most important of which is a production limit not to exceed 30 a year. Furthermore, the United States retains the right to build and deploy an aircraft with equivalent capabilities.

We believe that an issue of great importance is the question of whether the SALT II agreements can be verified adequately to protect our national security.

The many quantitative and qualitative limitations contained in the treaty will pose a stern challenge to our varied and highly capable intelligence systems. Our review of these matters indicated that U.S. ability to monitor Soviet compliance with the many provisions of the agreement varies substantially. The difficulty of this task and the loss of important capabilities associated with our collection systems in Iran, make it essential that we vigorously pursue improvements in the capabilities of our monitoring assets.

While recognizing the difficulties associated with verification, we must also acknowledge the important assistance the SALT II treaty will provide in this effort. With or without SALT, we will be required to keep track of Soviet military capabilities as the basis for our defense planning and ultimately our national security. Certain provisions within the treaty will make the task easier:

- *Counting rules*—Provisions on ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) such as "once tested MIRVed, all counted MIRVed" and "look alike, count alike" help resolve potential verification ambiguities; similarly, requirements for various types of externally observable differences assist in distinguishing among various aircraft and cruise missiles.

- *Non-interference / non concealment measures*—Most important of all is insuring access to photographic and electronic monitoring data; in the absence of such measures, there would be no restriction on any intelligence-denial measures the Soviets might choose to take, severely compounding our intelligence gathering difficulties (a much greater problem for us than for the Soviets, due to the open U.S. society).

In this connection, there has been much discussion regarding agreement or lack of

agreement on telemetry encryption. The agreed Second Common Understanding to Article XV of the treaty states that "... neither party shall engage in deliberate denial of telemetric information, such as through the use of telemetry encryption, whenever such denial impedes verification of compliance with the provisions of the treaty." Any Soviet attempt to deny or impede our ability to monitor SALT-limited parameters would be regarded by us as a most grave violation of the treaty.

Thus far in this discussion of equity and mutual interest, I have concentrated on the key issues of most concern to us. There are also a number of important restrictions in SALT II which operate primarily to our advantage. Among the most important provisions having an impact on Soviet plans for strategic forces are:

- Aggregate limits that will require the Soviets to dismantle (or convert to non-offensive systems) 250-plus operational systems; these are older and less capable weapons but still a significant fraction of their total systems and megatonnage.

- The various limitations that will enhance the predictability of the range of Soviet force developments, thus assisting us in our force planning.

- The cap on RV (Re-entry Vehicle) fractionation that denies full exploitation of the major Soviet throw-weight advantage for the period of the treaty.

- Testing, production and deployment of the SS-16 [Soviet missile] banned.

On the other hand, the specific limits on the United States are quite nominal and provide the following options in planning our strategic forces:

- We can build an ICBM which fully meets our security requirements.

- We can continue with the modernization of our Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) program at the pace we determine.

- We can continue to modernize our air-breathing systems, including the exploitation of our air, ground and sea-launched cruise missiles.

The danger to the United States does not arise from any specific limitations in the agreement, but from potential consequences of unilateral actions or inactions in the past and, if we are not careful, in the future.

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Our ability to take the necessary programmatic actions to ensure essential strategic equivalence is the ultimate test for Salt II. Our options and flexibility under the treaty are adequate, so long as we choose to exercise them.

The most serious concern of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in this regard is the risk that SALT II could be allowed to become a tranquilizer to the American people, in which case adverse strategic trends could well become irreversible.

In 1972, our predecessors on the Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsed SALT I with the assurance that certain follow-on actions would be implemented to safeguard our strategic interests. Regrettably, their advice was not heeded. Had it been followed, we would face

less perilous strategic prospects in the 1980s, and we are convinced we could have achieved deeper mutual reductions in SALT II.

We are seriously concerned lest the nation repeat earlier mistakes through complacency, an incomplete understanding of the magnitude of the Soviet buildup, or an insufficient appreciation of the broader consequences of Soviet momentum in terms of stability, global power relationships and long term U.S. interests.

Therefore, we consider it absolutely essential that, if the nation accepts the SALT II agreement, it does so with a full understanding that we will be required to undertake a series of important strategic modernization programs in order to maintain strategic parity within the limits agreed upon. In this connection, the decision to proceed with the development of the MX (mobile) missile, capable of carrying 10 re-entry vehicles and deployed in a survivable basing mode, is an important step toward this end.

None of us is totally at ease with all the provisions of the SALT agreement. I expressed our concerns on the Soviet MLBMs and Backfire earlier and we also have significant concerns with regard to our ability to monitor certain aspects of the agreement. We believe, though, that the risks in this area are acceptable, provided we pursue vigorously challenges to questionable Soviet practices, improvements in the capability of our monitoring assets and modernization of our strategic forces. In this context, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe the agreement is adequately verifiable.

We believe it is essential that the nation and its leadership view SALT II as a modest but useful step in a long-range process which must include the resolve to provide adequate capabilities to maintain strategic equivalence coupled with vigorous efforts to achieve further substantial reductions.

If this can be achieved, history will record SALT II as a step forward; without this commitment, we will find that SALT II made little difference and may have been a net loss. Fortunately, our nation has the opportunity to make that choice.

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Glossary

Following is a glossary of selected terms used in the strategic arms discussion:

Fractionation—The division of a missile's payload into separate re-entry vehicles.

MIRV—Multiple Independently targetable Re-entry Vehicle; a package of two or more re-entry vehicles which can be carried by a single ballistic missile and delivered on separate targets. A missile so equipped is said to be MIRVed. MIRVing is a kind of fractionation.

MLBM—Modern Large Ballistic Missile; another term for Heavy Missile. A heavy missile is one with a large payload of nuclear warheads capable of destroying fixed, hardened targets, such as U.S. Minutemen ICBMs in silos hardened, or protected, by concrete.

Telemetry—The transmission of electronic signals by missiles to earth. Monitoring these signals aids in evaluating a weapon's performance and provides a way of verifying weapons tests undertaken by an adversary. Encryption of such signals means encoding them to conceal the data thus transmitted.